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# Teaching and Learning of Vedantic Literature

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## Abstract

The present paper highlights Swami Vivekananda's views on the extended range of education, religion, art, literature and spiritual aspects to bring the totality in multi dimensional world in which we live. It is this wholeness that the complete works of Swami Vivekananda's embodies in horizons of literary as well as educational par excellence. His work can be compared to ocean from where many rivers of knowledge originates.

Studies of social, economic, and political thought of Vivekananda are still relevent. Vivekananda's insights embrace multisided horizons of life.Swami Vivekananda laid emphasis on social unity and harmony for all classes. Swami Vivekananda's motto was to raise the intellectual ability and curiosity among the masses. He was of the view that the world problem can be sorted out if we think to uplift the down-trodden.

Vedantic literature left no stone untouched. The Vivekananda hermeneutic needs to be studied in multi-contexts. Vedantic literature proves an instrument to bring harmony in body, mind and soul. The basic gain in such a hermeneutic is that interpreting Swami Vivekananda's insights is in itself a profound meditation and speculation. Swami Vivekananda had directed youth to gain self-confidence and self- respect through education. He advocated for purity, patience and preservation by which we can overcome all obstacles.

**Keywords:** Education, Religion, Imagination, Literature, Pleasure, Language.

The first thing that strikes even a casual reader of Vivekananda literature is that one can enjoy the compelling excellence of language-even without interest or acceptance of the philosophical, educational, economical, social and spiritual insights. What the Swami Vivekanand said about education is that education means that the process by which character is formed, the strength of mind is increased, intellect is sharpened as a result of which one can stand on one's own feet. The incredible clarity can be sorted out by explaining complex philosophy or laying down blueprints for social and economic regeneration, or the immensely pragmatic educational agendas - to name a few - are the aspects that strike us transparently.


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Swami Vivekananda explained that the Vedanta philosophy was not Brahmnic or Buddhist, Christian or Muslim, but the sum total of all these religions. The Indian idea was to make a man find the best that he could in his environment and live up to it in all sincerity. An ideal grihastha is almost an ideal sannyasin. In fact, most values are common to both. The higher values are not mutually exclusive airtight compartments, contrasting and conflicting, or antagonistic to each other. An ideal grihastha must possess the detachment of a sannyasin, and an ideal sannyasin must fulfill the obligations towards all beings like the grihastha.

We may think that Swami Vivekananda has taken recourse to metaphorical language and therefore he is fond of poetic language. Swami Vivekananda himself mentions 'poetic' language and literature can bring revolutionary changes in educational scenarios. He adds, referring especially to Advaita Vedanta refers that the dry Advaita must become living-poetic-in everyday life, out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come and concrete moral forms and inculcate scientific, practical psychological and educational aspects. And all these must be put in a form so that a child may grasp uniformity lying in it.

He emphasized on the wholehearted approach of beauty and divinity. He is of the view that Vedantic education enhances our life skills and art of self-introspection, for that educator has to modify the current scenarios of curriculum and put forth Vedantic literature. What kind of a poet is Swami Vivekananda? Is poetry only a vehicle of personal emotions, social activism, and the like? Or is poetry invariably sensuous? In short, we can find the answers to these questions in Swami Vivekananda's literature. We have to take a turn in the direction of teaching pedagogics. His Literature provides knowledge of various social issues, cultural issues and educational barriers between educator and educated pertaining to India. Vedantic literature proves an instrument to bring harmony in body, mind and soul. Introducing yoga to the west, the Vedantic education system is a new ideal and inspiration for the entire world. According to him, the country's future depends on its people, stating that nation-building is his mission. Religion plays a vital role in encouraging the youth of the nation. He prioritized three things very essential for every man, every nation to be great is the power of goodness, absence of jealousy and suspicion and helping all who are trying to be good. Swami Vivekananda was a nationalist of immense love for his country, he was also a bridge-builder between religion and science.

## Insights on Arts and Literature

In his opinion, art and literature are part and parcel of each other. It is said that art is merely pleasing to the senses. One who has the mastery over the senses, who has overcome the body-idea, can alone appreciate true beauty, be it masculine, or feminine, or purely physical. We must see everything from a spiritual viewpoint. Nature is the manifestation of God. Ugliness and impurity are in the mind of him who sees ugliness and impurity. Non-appreciation of art is the result of ignorance. True art, true poetry, true music must always be spiritual.

Now the question arises what is spiritual? Let us get some insight from Vivekananda's corpus of oral and written texts. We could, perhaps, juxtapose the poem. Look at the poem 'Let Shyama Dance There!'


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*True, they garland Thee with skulls,*

*but shrink back*

*In fright and call Thee, 'O All-merciful'!*

*At Thy thunder peal of awful laughter,*

*At Thy nudeness-for space is thy garment-*

*Their hearts sink down with terror,*

*but they say*

*'It is the demons that the Mother kills!'*

*They only pretend they wish to see Thee,*

*But when the time comes,*

*at Thy sight they flee.*

*Thou art Death! To each and all in the world*

*Thou distributest the plague and disease*

*- Vessels of venom-filled*

*bythine own hands.*

Besides this poem, Vivekananda made two more remarks about this theme, when a disciple suggested to him that he should give up work for some time and take rest. Am I able to sit quietly, my son! Two or three days before Shri Ramakrishna's passing away, She whom he used to call "Kali" entered this body. It is She who takes me here and there and makes me work without letting me remain quiet or allowing me to look to my personal comforts. The ingrained skepticism of the disciple about such incidents asserted itself. Are you speaking metaphorically? Surely surprised that a close disciple should think of it as a metaphor, Vivekananda replied-

“Oh, no; two or three days before his leaving this body, he called me to his side one day, and asking me to sit before him, looked steadfastly at me and fell into Samadhi. Then I really felt that a subtle force like an electric shock was entering my body! In a little while, I also lost outward consciousness and sat motionless. How long I stayed in the condition, I do not remember; when consciousness returned, I found Shri Ramakrishna shedding tears. On questioning him, he answered me affectionately, today, giving you my all, I have become a beggar. With this power, you are to do many works for the world's good before you will return.”


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Juxtapose this incident with the deeply moving poem on Kali and we get a clue to which literature can be called spiritual. If this poem is introduced in the classroom students will have positive influence over them.

The extract from the poem on Kali and the narrative about the transmission of power are two integrally related manifestations of Vivekananda's unified sensibility. The poem evokes the paradoxes with which humans respond to Kali, and the narrative tells us about the descent of the Power behind both. Common people cannot understand them says the disciple. The question is - Can we really understand the totality of a creative expression ?

The tremendous orator who thundered throughout India by giving a clarion call for radical national regeneration also composed a poem on Kali. This seems to be the Vivekananda's creativity in awakening self-consciousness. Moreover, Vivekananda affirmed that the most creative imagination itself is not comparable to or a substitute for what he experienced. To receive the kind of experience Sri Ramakrishna gave, in Vivekananda's words, we have to get out of the body, out of mind and imagination, and leave this world out of sight. When we rise to be the absolute, we are no longer in the world-all is Subject, without object. But we are free and not free at the same time his poetry and his literacy narratives.

One night, when all was calm, Vivekananda's went alone to the side of the Ganges to meditate and commune with Nature. Coming back after a long time, he exclaimed to his Brother"Look, tonight I have heard the Ganges streaming in KedarRagini."

Obviously, this is a context of literature, and music, as inseparable coordinates. He heard the music and he described it for us. Sahitya is nectar of cogitation, and yields the nectar of interior reflection; He heard the music and he described it for us., nectar of cogitation, and yields the nectar of interior reflection; and sangita throws us into an instantaneous tasting of sweetness.

This kind of experience was not impossible for one who could hear the Omkara-Dhvani, the un-vibrated sound of the Life vibration of the universe. Sometimes he used to perceive one ceaseless Beauty in sound, taste and space. In the realisation of that infinite Beauty, at the dawn of which the poet is struck dumb, the painter's pencil drops from his hand and the sculptor stands motionless, the Swami would sing with proud elation.

Calmed are the clamours of the urgent flesh, hushed is the tumult of the boastful mind, cords of the heart are loosened and set free. Unfastened are the bondages that bind, attachment and delusion are no more. There sounds sonorous the Sound Void of vibration! Verily Thy Vocie!

The experience that made Swamiji compose the poem is just not an aesthetic one. It has great significance in real classroom teaching learning. For the poets, they say, 'thought is an experience'. For a rishi who is a poet, experience is not just emotions or thoughts recollected in tranquility. Such poems are rarely posthumous crystallizations. They are marked by a simultaneous creative process. In short, bhava and bhasha - experience and expression - are a fused totality. Even imagination is transcended. It is samanantarasamagradrishti, an equanimous holistic vision as well as samagrasrishti, a vision of totality.


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Try to keep up the imagination in Yoga, being careful to deep it is pure and holy. We all have our peculiarities in the way of imaginative power; follow the way most natural to you; it will be the easiest.

## The Power of Imagination

What, according to Vivekananda is imagination? With absolute clarity he says that the same faculty that we employ in dreams and thoughts, namely, imagination, will also be the means by which we arrive at Truth. When the imagination is very powerful, the object becomes visualised is very powerful, then the objects can be approached with off hand. This is the power that is in everyone and its manifestation is a process of visualizing it. In the same way, the more powerful the imagination, the more quickly will the real result be attained, with the awakening of inner conciousness. It is interesting to note that in a remarkable book entitled Seven Little Known Birds of the Inner Eye, the novelist and art critic like Mulk Raj Anand has discussed many subtleties of the kundalini and the arts. Vivekananda, however, sounds a note of cautionthat Imagination properly employed is our greatest friend, it goes beyond reason and it the only light that takes us everywhere.

A unique occasion in which this power beyond reason takes us everywhere happened when Vivekananda spoke at the Parliament of Religions, Sisters and Brothers of America the words created an instant communion, which made the huge gathering rise to their feet. What is it that they experienced? Inexplicable and intensejoy. When Vivekanand spoke, It fills my heart with joy unspeakable, the listeners too felt, indeed experienced, that unspeakable joy, explanations came later. As in the case of Kali entering the heart of Swamiji, in reality and not metaphorically, the solidarity and oneness of humanity had in that moment made an enduring entry.

Vivekananda literature balances knowledge with wisdom and even information given in such a way that it becomes instantly intelligible. His Complete Works are invariably in a language that he suggested should be a totality, in which shabda, sound, meaning and knowledge are blended. Such a language is remarkably aesthetic, without aestheticizing the subject. Only then comes joy-not just the titillating pleasure of words. Thus language could be used with an implicit awareness of what is pleasure and, what is joy.

Studies of social, economic, and political thought of Vivekananda are steadily increasing. If literature is inexhaustible to contemplation, Vivekananda's insights embrace almost every aspect of personal, interpersonal, national, and international areas. One now realizes his wisdom in exhorting that active politics should be left alone by Ramakrishna Mission. Invariably he followed the linguistic path that his Lord and Master didSimplicity is the essence of life. This fundamental has been applied in teaching learning process. Vedantic philosophy emphasized on the fact that my ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. It must express the thought which is intended to be conveyed.


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## Naturalness of Language

Language to be simple should also be packed with the power of thought. Going through the complete Works of Vivekananda at random, one is startled by the richness of the insight, the naturalness of the imagery, and above all, the explicit or implicit urge to make the thoughts live centers of activism.

A considerable portion of Vivekananda complete works has been reduced to the written form oral transcriptions. It is the spoken words that literally kindled the inherent aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of the listeners. If one looks at the traditions of Sanskrit, one realizes something that remains largely unexposed with the morality of his language, Vivekananda has brought into being a unique continuity of classical linguistic tradition.Vivekananda's Complete Works sustain interpretation of religious texts and religious interpretation of any text.

## Educational views

The essential characteristic of the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda are idealism, naturalism and pragmatism. Swami Vivekananda maintained that the total liberation of mankind is very essential, it is the foundation stone of our education. Swami Vivekananda laid emphasis on social unity for social-economical empowerment of the people. He was of the view that upliftment of the down-trodden will work in a unique way.

Education must help the individual to recognize his cultural heritage and to use it in his struggle of life. Education is a life-long process towards the fullest development of human personality, self-discovery, self-perfection, self-awareness and self-manifestation are the key indicators of human life. Education is the character development of the child.

The real education according to Swami Vivekananda is that which prepares the individual for struggle for existence.Education prepares a man for social service, to develop his character and finally imbibes him with the spirit and courage of a lion. Education is a tool of liberation from the darkness and ignorance. Swami Vivekananda strongly pleaded that development of character through the service of his fellowmen, the utilization of his talents for ensuring the happiness and welfare of the human beings should be the ultimate aim of the education.

## Teaching Implications

The teachings of Swami Vivekananda are still applicable in teaching learning environment. His teachings are vast, immortal and precious and powerful, he taught his followers about the inner and deeper meaning of education. He spread the message of humanity and love. Swami Vivekananda taught how to get freedom from the religious, caste, social and economical prejudices.

Teaching and learning are part of the development of man. The teacher only guides, suggests, points out and helps the student. The teacher only motivates and encourages the students to find out the hidden treasure of knowledge.


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Swami Vivekananda'steachings promoted to eliminate hatred and intolerance from personality disorder of academicians, students and those who are associated with other professions. His teachings laid stress on sincerity and truthfulness in thoughts, deeds and actions.His teachings stated that patience, perseverance and purity of thought and action are the keys to ones success in life.

## Conclusion

Thus we can say that Vivekananda has his own distinct identity in speaking and writing. He is not a derivative of the paraphrasing of other's ideas. Moreover, whether it is Vedas, Education, Philosophy, Itihasa, Kavya, Sutra Vangmaya, narratives, or other genres, Vivekananda complete work reflects unmistakable traces that served him in terms of his own profound originality. All these point proves the fact that his complete work is certainly a contemporary kalpataru, with-fulfilling tree, andkamadhenu, wish-fulfilling celestial cow. The overall result of all these factors is that a new value orientation to the writing and assessing of literature can be drawn and applied rigorously in sphere of classroom as a possible corrective to the extremities of literary cultural and educational scenario of the day.

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